

REMARKS

The Office Action mailed August 6, 2008, has been reviewed and the Examiner's comments carefully considered. The Examiner's indication that claims 27 and 35 are allowable is noted with appreciation. Claims 25, 27 and 35 have been amended. The amendment to claim 25 merely removes redundant language already set forth in independent claim 23, from which claim 25 depends.

Therefore, claims 23-44 remain pending and are submitted for reconsideration.

Allowable Subject Matter

The indication that claims 27 and 35 contain allowable subject matter is acknowledged with appreciation. Claims 27 and 35 have been rewritten in independent form and are now in condition for allowance. Allowance of claims 27 and 35 is respectfully requested.

Rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 102

Claims 23, 25-26, 28-29 and 35 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,676,147 ("Ozaki"). As mentioned above, claim 35 is also indicated as containing allowable subject matter. Thus, the rejection of claim 35 is assumed to be in error. The rejection should be withdrawn because Ozaki does not disclose, teach or suggest the claimed invention.

For example, Ozaki fails to disclose, teach or suggest a passenger airbag module wherein "the length of the web along the side of the gas outlet opening is shorter than the space in the module housing for the folded airbag so that the web partially separates the airbag package" as called for in claim 23. As set forth in claim 23, the claimed web partially separates the folded airbag (airbag package). This separation is possible because (as shown, for example, in Fig. 1B of the application) the claimed web does not extend over the entire length of the upper part of the housing. Also, as shown in Fig. 1B of the present application, the claimed "shorter" length web is completely surrounded by the folded airbag package (i.e., both ends of the web and the sides of the web "separate" the "airbag package.")

Ozaki discloses an airbag device of Ozaki includes a plurality of blowoff holes 42 and a partition wall 40. *See* FIG. 1. However, Ozaki discloses that “[t]he partition wall 40 is...formed over the whole width of the casing.” *See* Col. 7, lines 6-10; Fig. 2. That is, Fig. 2 of Ozaki clearly shows that the partition wall 40 extends the entire “length” (i.e., width as described in Ozaki) of the casing 12. Thus, the partition wall 40 is not “shorter” and cannot “partially” separate the airbag 14 as set forth in claim 23. As stated above, independent claim 23 is directed to a passenger airbag module “wherein the length of the web along the side of the gas outlet opening is shorter than the space in the module housing for the folded airbag so that the web partially separates the folded airbag.” In contrast, because the partition 40 of Ozaki extends the whole width of the casing shown in Fig. 2, the partition 40 does not partially separate the folded airbag. Accordingly, Ozaki does not disclose, teach or suggest the claimed invention and the rejection of claim 23 should be withdrawn.

Claims 25, 26, 28, 29 and 32 depend from claim 23 and are therefore allowable for at least the reasons set forth above without regard to further patentable limitations contained therein.

Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection is requested.

Claim Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claim 32 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Ozaki in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,848,803 (“Tonooka”). As set forth above, Ozaki fails to disclose, teach or suggest each and every limitation of claim 23. Claim 32 depends from claim 23. Therefore, for at least the reasons set forth above with regard to claim 23, the rejection of claim 32 should be withdrawn. Furthermore, the rejection should be withdrawn because neither Tonooka nor Ozaki 9(alone or in combination) disclose each and every limitation of independent claim 32 as amended.

Claim 32 is directed to a passenger airbag module “wherein the web extends directly along the edge of the gas outlet opening.” By way of example, the Examiner is directed to Fig. 2A of the present application which shows a web located on the edge of the gas outlet opening.

The Office Action acknowledges that the Ozaki fails to disclose “wherein the web extends directly along the edge of the gas outlet opening” as claimed in claim 32. To cure the deficiency of Ozaki, the Office Action relies on Tonooka. Tonooka discloses an air bag module having guide fins 61. The module includes apertures 62 located in the airbag retainer 51. The guide fins 61 are located in the apertures 62 of the airbag retainer. Thus, the guide fins do not extend along the end of the gas inlet opening as called for in claim 32. Instead the guide fins are located in the “opening” 62 and actually form the edge of the opening. Furthermore, the guide fins function to direct the flow in inflation gas and do not function to partition the folded airbag. Thus, one of ordinary skill in the art would not have looked to the teachings of Tonooka with regard to guide fins as a resource for modifying the design disclosed in Ozaki. Thus, for this additional reason, the rejection of claim 32 should be withdrawn.

Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

Conclusion

Applicant believes that the present application is now in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration of the application as amended is respectfully requested.

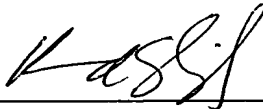
The Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned by telephone if it is felt that a telephone interview would advance the prosecution of the present application.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any additional fees which may be required regarding this application under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16-1.17, or credit any overpayment, to Deposit Account No. 19-0741. Should no proper payment be enclosed herewith, as by a check being in the wrong amount, unsigned, post-dated, otherwise improper or informal or even entirely missing or a credit card payment form being unsigned, providing incorrect information resulting in a rejected credit card transaction, or even entirely missing, the Commissioner is authorized to charge the unpaid amount to Deposit Account No. 19-0741.

If any extensions of time are needed for timely acceptance of papers submitted herewith, Applicant hereby petitions for such extension under 37 C.F.R. §1.136 and authorizes payment of any such extensions fees to Deposit Account No. 19-0741.

Respectfully submitted,

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By 

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